

Chapter 13

Protests Revisited: Political Configurations, Political Culture and Protest Impact



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13.1 Introduction

Migration and asylum issues are an important and contested policy field (van der Brug et al. 2015; Cinalli 2016). Migratory movements affect the issue of state sovereignty as much as they change societies. The modes of contestation and politicization, however, vary and change through cycles of attention and within different national and local contexts. This book brings together new empirical research on a set of three protest types: first, solidarity protests, second, refugee self-organized protests and third, mobilizations against newly arrived refugees in three countries, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. By looking at supportive, self-organized, and counter movements, we expect to provide a nuanced portrait of contemporary bottom-up mobilizations and contestations in the field of refugee and migration policies. In line with social movement studies, this study on political protest takes as its starting point the assumption that grassroots activism, civil disobedience, resistance, lobbying efforts, and more traditional forms of claims-making and politics together constitute an important policy field and are co-constitutive for an adequate understanding of modern democratic governance. However, it is not easy to decipher how such co-constitutive processes work and whether and how bottom-up mobilizations have an impact (Giugni et al. 1999) on societal debates, the governance in the field of asylum, migrant and refugee reception, and their inclusion. In order to investigate these and other issues with the necessary thoroughness, the volume's contributions

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engage prominently with protests in one sub-field of migration-related contestations: deportations (part II and some contributions in part III). The contributions on refugee self-organized protests (part III) and restrictive protests (part IV) as well as the contextualizing chapters in Part I enable us to grasp and contextualize the lines of solidarity and conflict (see Rosenberger 2018).

Why make an empirically-based analysis through the lens of deportation? Nancy Hiemstra (2016), in her review essay on recent studies on deportation and detention, lamented that existing research identifies deportation and detention “as routine responses to immigration” (2016, 3), but does not examine the potential for change or disruption. This has been a key motivation for this book and the comparative, trilateral research project on anti-deportation protests that forms the foundation of many of the chapters. Deportations are indeed subject to societal debate and provoke civil society actors’ collective action. Therefore, one initial added benefit of this volume is that it presents entirely new data in the field of comparative deportation studies regarding repertoires, strategies, and the impacts of political protest. Research on deportation has so far been either comparative on a macro level (by comparing deportation statistics and policies in “deportation nations,” Wong 2015), but failed to take into account bottom-up mobilizations, or it has operated less with systematic empirical research, but more in terms of theorizing (De Genova and Peutz 2010). Our research project contains two types of systematic data: first, a new comprehensive quantitative data set on protests against deportations from media analysis (1993–2013) in three countries, and second qualitative data from 15 strategically selected case studies. These data provide a basis for analyses that can say more than that protests are “place- or circumstance-specific,” as Hiemstra (2016, 3) characterized most research outcomes so far. A second added benefit of the volume is that it contributes with its broad data basis to the question whether anti-deportation protests constitute a transnational movement (Tazreiter 2010). As our data indicates, there is not much evidence for such a transnationally connected movement. On the other hand, it is exactly this same data that points to another type of connection, which has not been taken into consideration often. There is a broad and often indirectly as well as directly connected spectrum of protests around the issue of non-citizens’ rights and national sovereignty. It therefore intends as a third added benefit to overcome the tendency to take an isolationist approach in much of the social movement literature. Its objective is to better understand the constellations, repertoires, and mechanisms contributing to movement dynamics and to protest outcomes.

In this concluding chapter, we take stock of contributing to the study of movement dynamics and protest outcomes. Furthermore, we discuss these in the light of social movement theories and existing scholarship on deportation and pro-migrant and anti-migrant and refugee mobilization. Given the systematic and comparative research design of the trilateral research project on anti-deportation protests, these results will be predominantly discussed in the conclusion. In this chapter, we first look from above, so to speak, onto our research field, and then go back to our initial theoretical approach, namely the Political Opportunity Structure Approach (POS) from social movement studies. Here, we focus in particular on national political settings as well as protest characteristics and inquire into their significance. Then we go deeper into

the protests and look at the repertoires and trajectories of protest and the importance of creating ties, as well as the question of whether any of these findings are related to diffusion processes. In the final part, we consider the outcomes of the protests.

13.2 Political Configurations: Convergent Political Dynamics from Above

In comparing and contextualizing protest activities, it becomes apparent to what degree the policies of the three countries under scrutiny have moved towards convergence over the years when confronted with asylum migration that has been labeled by vocal politicians and some parts of society as unwanted. Even though all three countries recognized the *Geneva Convention* of 1951 and its principle of non-refoulement early on, all three states installed effective asylum laws late in the 1980s and amended these laws on asylum and on migration subsequently, following increasing numbers of people seeking protection. In Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, these amendments were concerned with the continuous restructuring and accelerating of asylum procedures, with the enforcement of deportability of allegedly undeserving asylum seekers through a prohibition of stay, and with the introduction and continuous expansion of safe third-country regulations. With the European harmonization of asylum policies with the Dublin regulation of 1990 and the persistence of difficulties in deporting asylum seekers, the policies converged with regard to the toleration of those people who are not transferable, with the creation of new entitlements to stay (refugees escaping gender-based violence), and the formulation of integration as a marker allowing asylum seekers to settle in the countries, or at least increasing their likelihood of doing so. Moreover, the procedures were increasingly concentrated in limited areas in order to accelerate the process and nevertheless guarantee minimal protection under the Geneva Convention.

In all three countries, deportations of rejected asylum seekers were carried out (with very different numbers in total, see Part I in this volume), although the “deportation gap” (Gibney 2008), which is the difference between the number of persons who were to be deported and the de facto deportation numbers, has been significant. Our findings confirm what Matthew Gibney identified a decade ago as a “deportation turn” in the policies of many states, meaning a tendency of governments to turn to this “complicated and controversial state power” (2008, 147). Gibney further argued that, until 2001, states clearly preferred other forms of immigration control, because deportations were difficult to carry out and constituted a risky endeavor for politicians. In fact, what our quantitative data and the case studies in this book show is that deportations have become increasingly an issue in civil society in all three countries, too. Convergences from above are confronted with distinctive national protest cultures “from below” (Rosenberger et al. 2017). The question is therefore not if, but how, such protests take place, and what explains their characteristics. The strong mobilization of civil society in Germany, predominantly in urban settings, is

due to a configuration of power that concedes formal, but not informal access to decision making. Therefore, unconventional challengers are immediately confronted with exclusive strategies by the state. However, administrators know that a persistent and media-fueled protest wave may coerce political decision makers into changing their attitudes (Eule 2014). Consociational states such as Switzerland have many entry gates for challengers suited to their institutions of direct democracy. These are binding forces in political campaigns and make visible street protests less probable, channeling disruptive opinions in their institutional access to political power. In Austria, protest actors show a rather low civil engagement in the form of social movement-type activism, which nevertheless peaks sporadically, especially as a reaction to increasing right-wing mobilization and by everyday, low-profile protest at the local level, often in rural areas.

A further dimension to be taken into account is the sub-national level in all three countries. Protests sometimes find very different regional, or even local, political opportunity structures. This can be due to regional or coalition governments, differing legal frameworks, or political legacies concerning the existence of informal networks or collaborations. The data clearly shows how the policy issue of deportation, which is by definition an issue of national sovereignty (Anderson et al. 2011), is influenced to a large degree by sub-national regulations that differ significantly. Such sub-national specificities thus provide very different political opportunity structures. Another factor that matters is how protest is configured along the lines of citizenship status, legal entitlements, and residence status by those who become active. These factors have also to be taken into consideration to explain different repertoires of protest as well as different protest outcomes in the field of migration-related contestations.

13.3 Repertoires of Protest

Protests may have different sources and may aim at different political objectives: They may be caused by self-interest or by solidarity for those who are in need of help—or, in the case of restrictionist movements, against the effects of immigration and refugee admission. The support of those not threatened by deportation may be seen especially as an act of civil courage, acting on behalf of others who are, in particular when they are in situations of extreme stress and (legal) deprivation, not able to speak and act for themselves in the same way others might be. A significant percentage of these solidarity protests, though the figure varies from country to country, are organized in collaboration with the affected, either the deportees themselves or members of their communities and networks. Therefore, protests may aim for larger social and political change or for individual solutions for potential deportees, depending on the motivations of those who are mobilizing. The creation of personal ties and the transmission of emotions may help to increase the mobilizing effect. In this respect, access to formal political channels may be beneficial, as it increases the leverage on political decision-makers. However, given the situation

that the demand to stop (a) deportation is directed against a formal state decision, this poses difficulties. Protest actors' legitimation strategies and the framing of the protest often take that into consideration by pointing to ethics and the necessary exemption from the general rule or refer to errors in the legal procedures. In the case of restrictionist mobilizations, this works to the contrary. Due to their anti-civil orientation, these are often directed against the potential establishment of social ties and the ordinary presence of refugees in society, addressing their protest particularly against refugee housing. However, as Haselbacher and Rosenberger (2018) point out, there are also contradictions, as restrictionist mobilizations often refer to equally restrictionist public policies and statements by politicians. In their repertoire of protests in the field of asylum and deportation, the role of the state is therefore suspense-packed.

In Austria, extra-parliamentary protest culture is more moderate than in Germany or Switzerland. Austrian political culture is traditionally oriented toward consensual decision making, particularly for those strata of society that are integrated into the neo-corporatist system. Social protest movements are usually excluded from institutionalized politics; this is also generally true for anti-deportation mobilizations, though in Austria (as in Switzerland) the analysis of case studies revealed the importance of state representatives, such as mayors or governors, in taking sides for specific deportees, while this phenomenon was entirely absent in the German case studies. However, state authorities have also frequently supported or encouraged restrictionists' mobilizations, as the study of Austria has demonstrated (see Haselbacher and Rosenberger 2018). In Germany, the strong state built around a representative parliamentary system results in the judiciary becoming the entry point for challengers and protesters. This is the reason why the protest repertoire in Germany is more disruptive and often far from being moderate, whereas in Switzerland a rather weak federal state and consensual direct democracy offer several entry gates for collective action. While in Austria in particular, and to some degree in Germany, protest is more likely to focus on specific deportations, the emphasis in Switzerland tends to be on policy reforms. In all three countries under scrutiny, deportees themselves are the ones most probable to engage in confrontational protest, whereas grassroots organizations, NGOs, and church-related actors tend to be active in demonstrative protests.

13.4 Trajectories of Protest and Their Explanations

While the number of protest events against deportations increased in Austria during the time period under investigation, it decreased in Switzerland, following a moderate peak at the beginning of the 2000s. In Germany, the number of protests was high during the 1990s, before decreasing rapidly during the early 2000s, only to increase again in the last years under consideration (2012 and 2013). These differences clearly underline that protest frequency is not associated with the number of enforced deportations: In Austria, protests have increased significantly while the

number of deportations has declined; in Germany, the number of deportations has declined, coinciding with a large number of protests in some years; in Switzerland, the number of deportations has increased, while the frequency of protest has fallen. There is thus apparently no direct connection between the numbers of deportations and the frequency of protests against them, nor are there necessarily more protests when there are more deportations, nor are there declines in the number of deportations due to a larger intensity of protests. Thus, an important result of the overall research project is to note a decoupling of deportation and protest incidents in all three countries.

The clear differences and changes over time suggest that protest against the deportation of rejected asylum seekers is strongly influenced by national particularities and the situational context. Hence, as the quantitative media analysis shows (see Ruedin et al. 2018), political opportunity structures for protest against the deportation of rejected asylum seekers vary between the three countries and offer a plausible explanation for differences in protest. The overall higher level of demonstrative protest forms over the period of investigation emphasizes the status of Germany as a “movement society” (Roth and Rucht 2008). While the participating actors, their repertoires, and the focus on specific deportations and individual solutions reflect Austria’s more moderate protest culture, the strong focus on policy-oriented claims in Switzerland may be embedded in its tradition of direct democracy. Moreover, in Austria and Switzerland, protest frequency is disconnected from the legal adaption of migration and deportation policies. Only in Germany was protest aimed at the adoption of more restrictive policies as early as the 1990s.

However, there are also striking similarities in protest trajectories among the three countries (see Ruedin et al. 2018): Demonstrative protest forms are much more common for individuals and communities with and without personal ties. Moreover, unlike NGOs, church-related actors, and politicians, potential deportees have a high probability of engaging in confrontational protest. Similarly, potential deportees and individuals with personal ties to the affected asylum seekers are more likely to focus on the specific deportation, while NGOs usually seek policy reform. Put differently, the same kinds of actors tend to use the same kinds of repertoires and make the same kinds of claims across countries. Differing political cultures in the countries under scrutiny may explain some exceptions to this rule, such as that ‘ordinary citizens’ in Austria and Germany tend to perform different kinds of protest, and the likelihood of them engaging in demonstrative protests is higher in the “movement society” of Germany than it is in Austria. Moreover, politicians rarely form part of protest mobilization in Germany, whereas in Austria and Switzerland mayors and politicians may sometimes align themselves with deportees. These similarities and deviations may lead to the conclusion that protesters close to the social movement sphere tend to engage in similar protests, while actors that do not engage regularly in collective action or who are committed to civil society engagement are more influenced by the given modes of political engagement in their respective societies.

Protest on behalf of an individual person or a family constitutes a large proportion of the protest events, especially in Austria and Germany, although in all three countries, protests against deportations have increasingly focused on policy change

rather than on preventing specific deportations. In Switzerland, where protest is more likely to focus on policy change, the situation appears to be somewhat idiosyncratic due to the entrenched tradition of direct democracy and the explicit possibility of expressing opposition against decisions by government and parliaments at all levels of governance. Finally, anti-deportation protests are identified as predominantly solidarity protests, organized at the local level and focusing on individual solutions rather than on social or legal change of the migration and border regime.

There are several intervening conditions that favored the organization of protest. In the Osnabrück case, for example, the creation of personal ties in order to break the isolation of asylum seekers confined to their accommodation was a central element of the local protest movement. Forming friendships and knowing the deportees was essential for the constitution of a local protest movement that aimed to reverse the public invisibility of asylum seekers (see Hinger et al. 2018).

Becoming “recognizable” was also important in the Vienna case (see Mokre 2018) and in the dynamics of the solidarity protest in Switzerland (see Bader and Probst 2018). The creation of strong relations between refugees and supporters helped to create a structure addressing the mobilization of private resources to start claiming rights of access to residency in the country. Friendship and romantic relationships were the glue which reinforced collective struggle. Emotions and ties have the power to build up connections between different social groups. These ties and the active taking sides of protestors for specific beneficiaries can sometimes last over a long period. Both in the media analysis as well as in some of the case studies, we found ties that ran over many years. This also explains the unexpected outcome of the case study analysis in circumstances where deportees were in fact deported (see Kirchhoff et al. 2018), they were in all but one case able to return. It was not always possible to precisely reconstruct the occurrences of the return, but there are strong indications that the supporters maintained contact with the deported individuals or families. There are a number of options for return, but all require ties that last longer than the immediate process before deportation.

As evinced by the quantitative media analysis and in most case studies, deportees were previously in touch with other persons (citizens or other migrants) who supported them in their struggles against deportation (see Ruedin et al. 2018). There were, however, also cases where protests emerged without these contacts, such as through a support group for deportees in a detention center. Such protests are driven not by personal empathy, but by more general claims for social justice or solidarity. Social and personal ties are an important relational resource, but they cannot be mobilized as easily as for example monetary resources, because building trust and ties takes time.

This leads us to the next issue, specifically the role of emotions, which is currently greatly discussed in social movement studies and other social sciences (the “emotional turn”). When conceptualizing the research project on deportation protests, we hypothesized that social ties and emotions would be central to successful protest mobilization. While we indeed found robust indications for the significance of social ties, the issue of emotions was more complex: Across all three countries, we found many cases where protest protagonists articulated strong and

positive feelings for the beneficiaries. However, there were also cases—mainly in Germany and Switzerland—where the impulse for the struggle originated with a general political motivation that did not necessarily have anything to do with the plight of individual deportable subjects. These mixed results mirror findings from other recent scholarship on deportation and detention. Rosenberger and Winkler (2014) demonstrated in the Austrian case that compassion and social ties are crucial to explaining anti-deportation protests. These actors are indeed largely focused on particular cases and cannot be assessed to be *emotional* rather than *political*, even though a commitment to one singular case may sometimes develop into a more general critique and lead to an investment in broader issues, once awareness of political issues has been raised. This evidence stands in contrast to the findings of Nick Gill (2016), who argued on the basis of data from the UK that the detention and deportation system produces moral distance, for the staff working in these institutions as well as for bystanders, locals, or potential volunteers and supporters.

The analysis of deportations as a conflicted issue would not be complete without a look at the role of challengers of anti-deportation protests.¹ There are two kinds of challengers: first, people and organizations that mobilize for stricter enforcement of deportations, and second, mobilizations against refugees in general or in related thematic terrains, such as the housing of asylum-seekers.

In the media analysis for the trilateral research project, only a handful of pro-deportation events could be identified. This confirms the rule that it is much harder to act against individual people than against sectional policies (Lahav 2004). No protests for the deportation of a specific individual or family could be identified, and there were no organized campaigns for deportations. What we found were some election campaigns or referendum materials that called for stricter enforcement of deportations in general.

Far more significant and influential are the broader mobilizations against refugees that took place, and still take place, in all three countries. They were analyzed in this volume in the chapters on Germany by Rucht and on Austria by Haselbacher and Rosenberger. The types of radical-right and right-wing populist parties and movements, however, differ significantly among the three countries. In Germany, radical-right parties for a long time did not attract significant numbers of voters, yet a significant proportion of the population nonetheless holds right-wing or radical right-wing worldviews, while sometimes deadly racist attacks spread fear among refugees, migrants, and visible minorities. Dieter Rucht (2018) identifies four sections of the right-wing spectrum: conservatives, right-wing populists, right-wing extremists, and right-wing terrorists. Given their organizational structure, Rucht considers the majority of German right-wingers' movement-type groups.

Reflecting these right-wing, restrictionist mobilizations in the light of anti-deportations protests, we would like to point to two observations:

¹ Given the original research design of the trilateral Taking Sides project, restrictionist protests or activities by self-organized refugees were not coded. However, these two facets of refugee-related mobilizations were nevertheless taken into account in order to provide a broader perspective on the contentious field of asylum and immigration in this book.

First, as mentioned, in none of the three countries under investigation in this book is there a movement *for* deportations. This is interesting insofar as in the policy field of deportations, the logic does not follow a contender logic. It is not the policy issue as such that is contested by oppositional movements. Instead, right-wing mobilizations choose different targets, such as refugee housing. The number of violent attacks in Germany (including setting fire to refugee accommodations that are under construction or even inhabited) has skyrocketed since 2015.² During the strong mobilization cycle against deportations in the early/mid 1990s, this was also the case. But why do restrictionist movements not mobilize for deportations? One explanation could lie in the character of anti-deportation mobilizations as implementation struggles (Rosenberger et al. 2018), which means that the broader public might be ‘in general’ in favor of strict immigration policies, but in the specific case of implementation, it breaks the heart of ordinary citizens if well-integrated children or a member of their soccer team is to be deported. When the deportee becomes a face, it is difficult even for right-wingers to win public support in favor of a deportation.

The second point we would like to make is on the relationship between the state and the protests. As mentioned, in Austria, restrictive protests find themselves often in a rather “close interaction between institutional actors and protest networks” (Haselbacher and Rosenberger 2018). This is noteworthy as the protestors legitimize their actions with reference to what official stances are, while anti-deportation mobilizations are characterized by a constellation of “state against migrants” (Ellermann 2009). Thus, right-wing mobilizations, even those using violence against property and people, position themselves closer to official policies than those anti-deportation protest actors who often legitimize their actions with appeals to human rights or compassion. This also indicates that, from a political opportunity structures perspective, the allies for anti-deportation protests tend less to be found within state apparatuses than it is the case in other movements, such as on gender equality. At the same time, in the cases of Austria and Switzerland, allies were also to be found among conservative political elites. Depending on the political culture, the relationship to the different levels of the federal state is configured by the different protest actors. These findings from the comparative and multi-level oriented research project call for further research on the role of state actors, including mayors and street-level bureaucrats.

13.5 Refining Patterns to Understand Outcomes

Social ties play an important role in the organization of protests on behalf of deportees. These ties are weak rather than strong, particularly since the persons to whom deportees have strong ties rarely have the competence and influence to effectively

²The website chronicles violent attacks against refugees in Germany: <https://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/service/chronik-vorfaelle> (accessed July 9, 2017).

find a path to help. Therefore, beneficiaries of support activities turn towards supporters perceived as capable of finding solutions, such as legal or social counseling services by NGOs or churches, even if there is no affective relation between the beneficiary and the supporter. In “personifying protest” (see Bader and Probst 2018), social ties with supporters arise thanks to the beneficiary’s participation in social structures and networks of the host society. Often, these supporters are either colleagues, classmates and their parents, or professionals and representatives of associations. In the latter case, the social tie linking the beneficiary to the protesters, though weak, has a bonding power since it triggers a networking process initiated by the civil society actors first informed about the beneficiary’s situation.

These committed citizens are at the center of the protest, deciding on the right strategies to use, and managing the different protest activities. They invest time and resources in order to make the protest successful. The request for assistance often resonates with core values linked to charity, justice, and human rights. The so-called “hard core” of the protest movement is motivated by the sympathy towards the beneficiary’s personality and life story, provoking a personal tie to them and inciting emotions of solidarity that fuel the protest. Citizens holding very different views on societal issues such as migration join together in order to defend a particular person or case they consider meriting their support. However, there are also generalized forms of protest in line with a larger political orientation that aims to challenge existing migration policies. As such, they address the drive for social change and remove certain negative outcomes of societal evolutions. Accordingly, the hard core is here mainly composed of politically left-wing oriented persons who are often engaged in activities for the defense of migrant interests.

The strategies of argumentation may be personified, highlighting the singularity of the case and the high degree of personal commitment of the beneficiary to the host society. This person—as the argument goes—deserves to stay since he or she shares all the mainstream values of the host society. “Deservingness” is the central argument in personified protest. By contrast, when the arguments are generalized, the supporters long for political reform. They courageously assume a strategy of public civil disobedience. They non-violently accept exceptionally breaking the law in order to let overarching constitutional principles prevail. The realization of this strategy is strongly indebted to the achievements of a liberal-democratic constitutional state: The objective to prevent deportation is done through public engagement and in the knowledge of potential legal consequences for these people. Their intention is to change the legal setting, thereby modifying or even ending the practice of deportation, since in their eyes the constitutional state fails to defend the substance of its arguments.

We are confronted according to Richard Dworkin (1985, 107) with “justice based” civil disobedience. Citizens feel an obligation to overturn a policy judged contrary to the rights of others. This type of civil disobedience is compatible with the liberal-democratic constitutional polity, since the fact of having rights vis-à-vis majorities is part of the conditionality of the principle of majoritarianism. Some

protestors may share the belief that borders should be abolished as along with policies that limit free circulation. All deportees may here be seen as case studies to document the violation of fundamental rights. Although the personal life story of the beneficiary is used to exemplify the consequences of inhumane migration laws, the beneficiaries appear as interchangeable in order to demonstrate the need for a change towards a “cosmopolitan” order or a “free choice” model of mobility. The central question that arises from these debates basically focuses on the future of our societies and its relationship to unselected migration.

In this context, the concept of deportability is also useful. In the literature the term has predominantly been used to capture the degree to which non-citizens are at risk of being deported (e.g. De Genova 2002; Paoletti 2010). When we look at the concept from the angle of anti-deportation struggles, the concept changes slightly. The mobilizations and tangible legal support for deportees attempt to make the beneficiaries of the solidarity action less deportable. As the data from the media analysis as well as the qualitative case studies of the Taking Sides project and the complementary case studies in this volume indicate, anti-deportation mobilizations are more likely to be successful if the factors that increase the likelihood for deportation—such as prominently a status of legal limbo and no legal counseling, social isolation and spatial segregation—are countered (Kirchhoff et al. 2018). It also indicates that a deportation is not only prevented when it is directly implemented, such as through raids or when someone is taken to a deportation charter flight, but also through all actions that decrease the deportability of a person at risk of being deported. Taking this into account, one could pose the question whether not only explicit anti-deportation actions—such as those that have constituted the sample of the Taking Sides project—but more generally all efforts to incorporate migrants and asylum-seekers with precarious legal status into the fabrics of society as well as support activities that empower them to become more knowledgeable about their rights and options, are part of the protests against deportations. Here, questions of intentionality (of the actors) and of indirect impact come up that were not part of this research project. This also refers to our next topic: the diffusion and the paths that social movement activities take.

13.6 Diffusion in Social Movement Activities

The data from the media analysis on anti-deportation protests in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (1993–2013) demonstrates that these were unconnected, small-scale protests at the local level that were not part of a transnational social movement (see Ruedin et al. 2018). Moreover, the 15 qualitative case studies vary significantly. A key explanatory factor for these variations lies in the differing political cultures of the countries in question. However, if we examine the data from a different perspective, the media analysis as well as the qualitative case studies have shown that there

are cross-cutting, common issues at stake: A similar set of actors is active in all three countries, using the same kinds of protest activity repertoires and developing similar demands and claims. How can we explain these similarities—perhaps by diffusion? Diffusion is an issue that has been much discussed in recent social movement literature, particularly given the existence of relevant global movements and cross-border activities in policy fields such as economic globalization, environmental issues, and human rights. This might also be the case for migration issues, including deportation, as there are various cross-border dimensions: the topic itself, the protagonists, international and transnational policies such as the international human rights instruments including the Geneva Convention, the European Dublin regime, or Frontex deportation and border control missions.

Diffusion is broadly discussed in the social movement literature and several useful differentiations have been introduced: first, the question about the content of diffusion, second the forms of diffusion, and third their impact (Kolins Givan et al. 2010, 2–3). Diffusion is not self-generated within movements, but linked to institutions, and there might be horizontal and scale shifts in diffusion. For the purposes of our brief wrap-up, we think of diffusion in two ways: first, as elements, themes, or forms of protest that diffused into the protests against deportations and hence influence it; and also the effects these mobilizations have on other protests.

The case study of Osnabrück (Hinger et al. 2018) shows how a spontaneous, rather radical form of protest—blocking an attempted deportation at night—spread, which one could call a horizontal diffusion. Within a short period of time, a broad spectrum of sympathetic locals engaged in this protest form. Later, refugees who had heard of the successful protest form also formed such a blockade themselves. The protest form then also diffused to other cities, and for some time in 2015 it became the most successful form of protest against so-called Dublin deportations in Germany. However, experiences from other places have also demonstrated how place-specific such a success is, because in other cities blockades led to more repressive responses by state forces. In the other countries under consideration as well, in particular in Switzerland, civil disobedience and forms of direct action were applied in Dublin cases. These diffused because of the specific political opportunity structure of the Dublin Regulation, which stipulates an exact time limit after such a prevented deportation after which a transfer to the country of first entry into the EU would no longer be executed. Conclusions on diffusion based on our data cannot be strong, but there are indications that the more similar a policy and issue is (such as in the Dublin cases), the more likely it is that stories about successful protests travel from place to place and result in a replication of protest forms.

For other features of protests against deportations, diffusion is only indirect. What can be observed is that many of the anti-deportation activities counter the isolation and/or individualization of the deportees. The latter is a key characteristic, as deportation “tends to operate as a radically individualizing and thus also [...] isolating event” (De Genova and Peutz 2010, 23). The protests that have been analyzed in this book, though, apply different strategies, legal as well as social, so

that the deportees can become visible as denizens in local and private contexts, by facilitating connections to actors and protests elsewhere. Questioning isolation as a strategy has diffused into protests against deportations over the past decade, particularly in the German context. The slogan “Break the isolation!” has been central to the self-organized refugee activities, criticizing the fact that many of the refugee accommodations and reception camps are situated in remote areas. This has not only been criticized as erecting barriers to social life, but also as a political strategy. Findings such as these indicate that there are similarities, but these do not go back to direct diffusion. However, what we can say is that in cases where protest actors are connected through virtual or personal networks with other anti-deportation or anti-racist groups, similarities go beyond mere coincidence.

Another means of diffusion, which could contribute to the emergence of a transnational social movement, can be observed after the period of our systematic media analysis, specifically with refugee protest activities in 2012 until the present in various European countries. The chapters in this book by Odugbesan/Schwartz and Mokre are all about refugee protests during more or less the same period in time. They seem to be hardly connected, except through traveling activists who act as a means of contact and potential diffusion. The case of the occupation of the Votive Church in Vienna (see Mokre 2018), for example, was watched closely by refugee activists in Germany. There are also links between local anti-deportation protests and transnational activities, such as the March for Freedom, in which local activists participated and returned home with new ideas and knowledge of the existence of protests elsewhere.

To conclude on the question of diffusion, the similarities in anti-deportation protests in most cases do not result from diffusion. Instead, the protests are highly local phenomena, in particular those of “ordinary citizens”. However, there is a notable exception in cases where social movement or refugee activists participate, where we can observe more diffusion, in particular on a discursive level (similar slogans and framings) and to some degree also in terms of forms of action. We return to the impact of anti-deportation protests on other social movements, another dimension of diffusion mentioned in the literature, in the next paragraph.

13.7 Some Implications of Protest Against Deportations

We already mentioned that protests against deportations cannot explain any rise or fall in absolute deportation numbers. Protests and deportation numbers are decoupled. There is no evidence for a connection in any of the countries. Furthermore, the official statistics (see Part I in this volume) do not contain data about failed deportations due to protest. In the German case, there are figures available for deportations that had to be stopped due to the resistance of the deportee (at most 3%), but these numbers do not include cases where deportation orders were revoked due to earlier,

for example judicial, interventions. Moreover, successful and ongoing protest may raise the political price for members of the executive branch and incline them to reverse or stop the procedures, against the measures taken by their bureaucracies (Eule 2014). To conclude, despite the decoupling of protests and overall deportation numbers, to pretend that such protests do not have any impact at all would be short-sighted. On the contrary, the case studies show at least four areas in which anti-deportation protests had relevance:

(a) *The Case Impact*

Even though there is no immediate relation between the number of protests and the number of deportations, we recorded several cases at the local level in which the likelihood of success for deportation protest was quite high. Our data shows many situations in which the engagement of outsiders, often professionals or individuals with links to professionals, such as lawyers or counselors from NGOs or charities, led to a questioning of the procedures and in which a deportation could be prevented. From the broad protest repertoire we examined, involving altruistic as much as instrumental reasons, we can conclude that more radical forms, such as blockades, were only (potentially) successful in those cases in which there was a follow-up, such as a legal means to stop the deportation or to submit a follow-up asylum application. Therefore, protests against deportations on the level of individual cases do indeed have an impact. In particular, certain campaigns have a chance of being successful if they address judicial scrutiny, because the central discursive resource of the liberal-left—the notion of human rights—better suits the judicial argumentation of the constitutional liberal state than the conservative notion of the sovereignty of nations. Nevertheless, although articulated in several professional or grassroots organizations, their central goal is to remove certain negative policy consequences.

(b) *The Movement Impact*

Such local, case-related initiatives might also extend beyond individual cases. In our sample of cases of anti-deportation protests, there is sufficient evidence for learning effects, often facilitated through personal networks with national or transnational justice organizations or through media coverage. Individuals or loose support networks in other cities asked for advice from those activists who had been involved in similar cases. The research teams also found evidence for a connection between case-related anti-deportation protests and the activities of self-organized refugees whose networks and groups functioned as transmission lines. They received information about successful anti-deportation protests, and even when the local support group (in successful cases) was dissolved, they could pass on the information and contacts. However, we cannot speak of a social movement against deportations as such, because the protest activities do not amount to a real movement: The collective actions often take place in isolation (with the notable cases of connections), and not all persons and groups involved have a feeling of belonging to a joint movement.

Instead, we would characterize the activities in urban areas as being connected, and sometimes part of, other social movements, such as anti-racist and pro-migrant movements, and in rural areas they tend to either not be aligned at all to such movements, or they are aligned to faith-based or other groups that are also involved in other struggles for human rights, ethical trade, and the like.

(c) *The Discursive Impact*

An important contribution of protests against deportations is the resulting increase in visibility of the issue and, as mentioned earlier, a counter-acting effect against the isolation of many asylum seekers. Deportations are often conducted at night, and asylum-seeker accommodation is situated in remote areas. Therefore, protests against deportations and media coverage thereof bring the issue to the attention of a public that usually has no contact with deportees. In order to successfully prevent a deportation, people also need to talk about their risk of being deported and to go public when they receive a letter informing them of their upcoming deportation (see Odugbesan and Schwiertz 2018). Given the widespread association of deportees with criminals (for example, through detention prisons, through deportees being taken by police during the night, or through pictures of handcuffed deportees), knowledge of the phenomenon and of the specific circumstances of deportations makes these criminalizing practices debatable.

(d) *The Politicizing Impact*

The visible presence and discursive impact of deportees or deportable populations is a prerequisite for another outcome of these protests, specifically the politicization of protest actors that were not previously social movement activists. As our media analysis and case studies have shown, individuals from a wide spectrum of age groups, political orientations, educational backgrounds, and professions potentially participate in anti-deportation protests. Several protest actions from among civil society in different places were conducted to voice disapproval with official asylum and deportation policies. The strategies were personifying—focusing on the deportation of a specific person or family who is or are seen as integrated in the community and thus deserving of the right to stay. Conversely, generalizing protests are conducted by religious groups or left-oriented activists using the case(s) of one or several migrants as examples illustrating the outcomes of a policy, which they perceive as unjust and whose reform they demand. The activists under scrutiny in this research were beyond the spectrum of social movement activists, political party members, or religious groups. The qualitative case studies demonstrated the significant personal impact that a deportation order can have on acquaintances. In some of the interviews, we were able to follow the interviewee step-by-step through the phases of moral shock, organizing protest activities on different levels, broadening their perspective, and learning about asylum procedures and asylum policies in general, thereby changing the political and ethical judgments they had initially held.

13.8 Outlook

The results of this book show that in countries in which deportations belong to the established reaction to unwanted immigration, deportations are also contested. Most protests are directed against clearly defined deportations of individuals or families; in Switzerland and Germany, however, some of the protests also tend to take a more general direction and criticize broader policy orientations. The protests are driven by humane as well as political motivations, and the actors hold a wide spectrum of political views, and in particular in Austria and Switzerland, depending on the local context, including conservative forces. Furthermore, the repertoire of protest forms is similar in all countries, with differences going back to national protest cultures with, for example, more demonstrations in Germany, more institutionalized forms in Austria, and more public statements in Switzerland. The broad set of quantitative and qualitative data that has been generated by this trilateral research project clearly shows that there are differences in the three countries under investigation that can be explained by differing political opportunity structures, and in particular the factor of political culture. In the case of protests directed against the Dublin deportations, we can see interesting similarities, suggesting the relevance of a European opportunity structure (here, through the *Dublin Regulation*) that pre-configures the spectrum of successful responses to such deportations. Here, follow-up research focusing entirely on the contestation of Dublin transfers would be desirable. Another issue for further research involves the sustained effects of protest and the role of social ties in these. In almost all qualitative case studies that ended with a deportation, the deportees were able to return after a while. Here, a look into the black box of what happened after the deportation would be insightful. A third area for further investigation would be the biographical impact of anti-deportation protests, with further concentration on self-organized refugees and their potential role as grass tops or policy entrepreneurs in communities that are threatened with deportation, but also on the so-called ordinary citizens that had never before been politically active or been involved in such actions.

This book is not only to be read as a contribution to the increasing literature on deportation studies, but as a European input to the more general social movement literature, to a certain extent bridging the persistent divide between American and European scholarship. According to Accornero and Fillieule (2016), European scholars concentrate their analysis on major structural issues—the structural causes of social movements, their ideologies, and the relationship with the culture of advanced capitalist societies—whereas the focus of American research is predominantly on groups and individuals, their forms of action, and their motivations. This book combines these approaches and goes beyond a structural analysis, including emotions and social ties as a source and resource for collective political behavior. It

therefore follows an innovative research agenda, in which the interest in activists' and actors' trajectories is accompanied by a strong focus on the emotional aspects of the engagement (or disengagement) process. This book has not only kept an eye on progressive pro-immigrant mobilization, but has also investigated the mobilization of restrictive protest against asylum seekers and its political demand to reduce their presence and visibility. This diversification of "contentious politics" corresponds to a more comprehensive analysis of the deportation field, using different approaches to understand the structural conditions as well as the contingent political and socio-psychological factors that have contributed to a revitalization or persistence of anti-immigrant protest. Therefore, this book contributes to a methodological expansion in understanding collective protest action, having referred to a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, history, social psychology, and demography. These interdisciplinary approaches provide an important input to the increasingly hybridized literature on social movements. We are deeply convinced that only with pluralistic perspectives and empirically grounded research can new social realities evolving outside of theories be comprehended, particularly when accelerated by events.

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